



Onehunga Business Association
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Dear Sir or Madam,

The past 12 months has been a continuation of the previous year in overcoming the challenges faced by the Covid disruption and the inability to plan with certainty.

Overall Onehunga has continued to demonstrate its tenacity while battling through lockdowns, employee shortages and the general uncertainty of the economic climate. Our community remains friendly and supportive with Dress-Smart helping us to continue to attract customers from around the Auckland region.

It has been distressing to witness the accelerated pressure of crime across Auckland which was also visible in Onehunga in the first half of 2022. The OBA office has been aware of the impact on business and always try to be responsive to these issues. Planning is in place to replace/upgrade our CCTV infrastructure, and this is being given priority so that we can ensure we are providing the most efficient deterrent possible.

As the Manager's Report outlines, our retail income, as per Marketview results, has dropped over the last year primarily due to the instability in the second half of 2021. By the end of the financial year, we were back tracking to 2018/19 levels which we hope is evident in your businesses. This data does not include any online spending, so we hope this is also tracking positively for everyone.

Once again, we have not seen any substantial progress by Panuku on their Transformation Projects over the last year. They are at the planning stage for the Waiapu block, and the initial indication is that the carparks as they exist now will be developed into apartment blocks and a public open space corridor. As part of this process, they are removing carparks from public ownership on the justification that Countdown & Dress Smart are providing additional parking. This will inevitably have a negative impact on Mainstreet retail, which need to be well managed to try and avoid any negative impacts on businesses. Amanda and I meet them monthly to help them understand how we can see future change, but this does not alter the demands for here and now. Panuku have not been able to provide any robust data to justify the reduction in public carparking. We have requested information on the projected number of apartment dwellers shopping locally to replace shoppers who currently arrive by vehicle. Regardless of the move to electric vehicles etc space is still going to be required to park those vehicles. One of our competitors for the consumer dollar is Sylvia Park which provides approx. 4,000 free car parks. The developments of Countdown and Dress-Smart have also slowed considerably over the last 2 years, and we continue to watch out for confirmation of their plans to ensure that the design of their developments allows for attractive and safe access to and from the Mainstreet.

When considering Panuku proposals alongside the reduction in services that Auckland Transport have put in place for the train service there appears to be very little coordination within Auckland Council in achieving the goal to increase the numbers using public transport. Having basically destroyed the viability of the train service into Onehunga (passenger reduction of approx. 60%) it will not surprise me if in the next two years Auckland Transport use the reduction in numbers to try and justify a business case to permanently close the Onehunga line.

In the Manager's Report, you will find an update on the previous financial year and the office's response to changing circumstances, a summary of Marketview data, an outline of how membership rates money has been distributed and an overview of the Onehunga social media figures.

Some things remain constant. We continue to be adversely affected by traffic issues with Onehunga being used as a throughway for heavy vehicles & commuters alike. The Onehunga Mall/Neilson Street area is increasingly congested and the calls for gains in business productivity will never be realised while the status quo remains. The answer is NOT to force the industrial area to relocate to Drury as that will further reduce the relevance of the Mainstreet. This area will always be a busy and it is up to Auckland Council to work with the community (business & residential) to find a sustainable outcome.

This is my last term on the OBA Executive. I have seen a lot of change over the last 17 years with the nature of retail mix changing which is important to stay relevant. In Onehunga we need to create our own niche and work together to deliver on this. Future adjustments will come with high density residential, and this will bring a new set of challenges.

For me, working and contributing towards Onehunga business has been an honour. It has been an interesting journey with an eclectic mix of projects and characters. Major milestones achieved remain the way Onehunga has maintained its "point of difference", lobbying for the restoration of Taumanu, the revitalisation of the Onehunga Festival and the continuation of the Christmas Parade. The challenges of achieving public access to Onehunga Wharf, the disruption that will be caused by the Light Rail Project whilst at the same time finding a solution to the traffic issues remain. Based on the experience of the last 17 years the only advice I can give is that 99% of the time politicians do not make good planners as long-term planning does not align with their election cycles.

I remain part of the local business community and willing to assist wherever possible.

I encourage you to support the business association by becoming a part of the Executive Committee We need your strategic vision to support the management team to ensure that Onehunga constantly evolves for the better. You are welcome to drop into the OBA office at 149 Onehunga Mall to discuss with Amanda.

I also thank the elected members of the committee and the management team of Amanda, Laura, Angela & Tevita. Considerable effort has gone into the successful running of the OBA.

Finally, please come to our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26 October. Things are different this year and we are hosting a lunch at Brothers Beer from 12pm where we will be able to address any questions and provide some insight into the coming year.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Gibson', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Peter Gibson
Onehunga Business Association Chairperson